DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 252 986 EC 171 319

AUTHOR Holtzman, Wayne H., Jr.; Mendoza, Patricia
TITLE Decision Models to Assist in Assessment Procedures for Bilingual Exceptional Children.
PUB DATE Aug 84
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (92nd, Toronto, Canada, August 24-28, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bilingual Education; *Cultural Differences; Decision Making; Elementary Secondary Education; *Learning Disabilities; *Limited English Speaking; *Models; Non English Speaking; *Spanish Speaking; Special Education; *Student Evaluation; *Student Placement

ABSTRACT

The reasons for overrepresentation of Hispanic children in the learning disability service category are examined, and two assessment models designed to accommodate the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) and bilingual exceptional children are analyzed. The first model, a modification of J. Tucker's model, proposes parent consultation at every stage of the assessment process and relies on a variety of different types of data from different sources. P. Mendoza's Coordinated Service Delivery Model is also described, and its advantages are noted to include delineation of procedural safeguards at the preassessment stage to validate referral of culturally/linguistically different students or LEP students. This model emphasizes determination of specific levels of language proficiency through a comprehensive language assessment. It is suggested that an integration of two models holds the most promise. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED252986

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
[1] This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
[ ] Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

DECISION MAKING MODELS TO ASSIST IN ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES FOR BILINGUAL EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Wayne H. Holtzman, Jr.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

by

Wayne H. Holtzman, Jr., Ph.D.
and
Patricia Mendoza, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin

Overrepresentation of Hispanic children in special education programs for the disabled (Ortiz and Yates, 1981) has become of increasing concern to school psychological and appraisal personnel. When aggregated incidence figures associated with service to exceptional Hispanics are examined, the percentage of Hispanic students participating in special education suggests that Hispanics are placed in special education at a rate consistent with their percentage of representation in the general population. However, examination of data by categories of handicapping conditions indicates that Hispanics are underserved in all special education categories, with one exception--learning disabilities.

Hispanics are overrepresented by approximately 300% in the learning disabilities service category, almost three times as many Hispanics as would be expected from their representation in the general student population. Since learning disability classes are small group settings, teachers often refer limited English proficient (LEP) students simply so that they receive special help. Larger school settings are viewed as being less beneficial (Shepard and Smith, 1981). An additional finding based on a series of studies by Ortiz and Yates (1981, 1983) indicates that 80 of the Hispanic students

EC171319

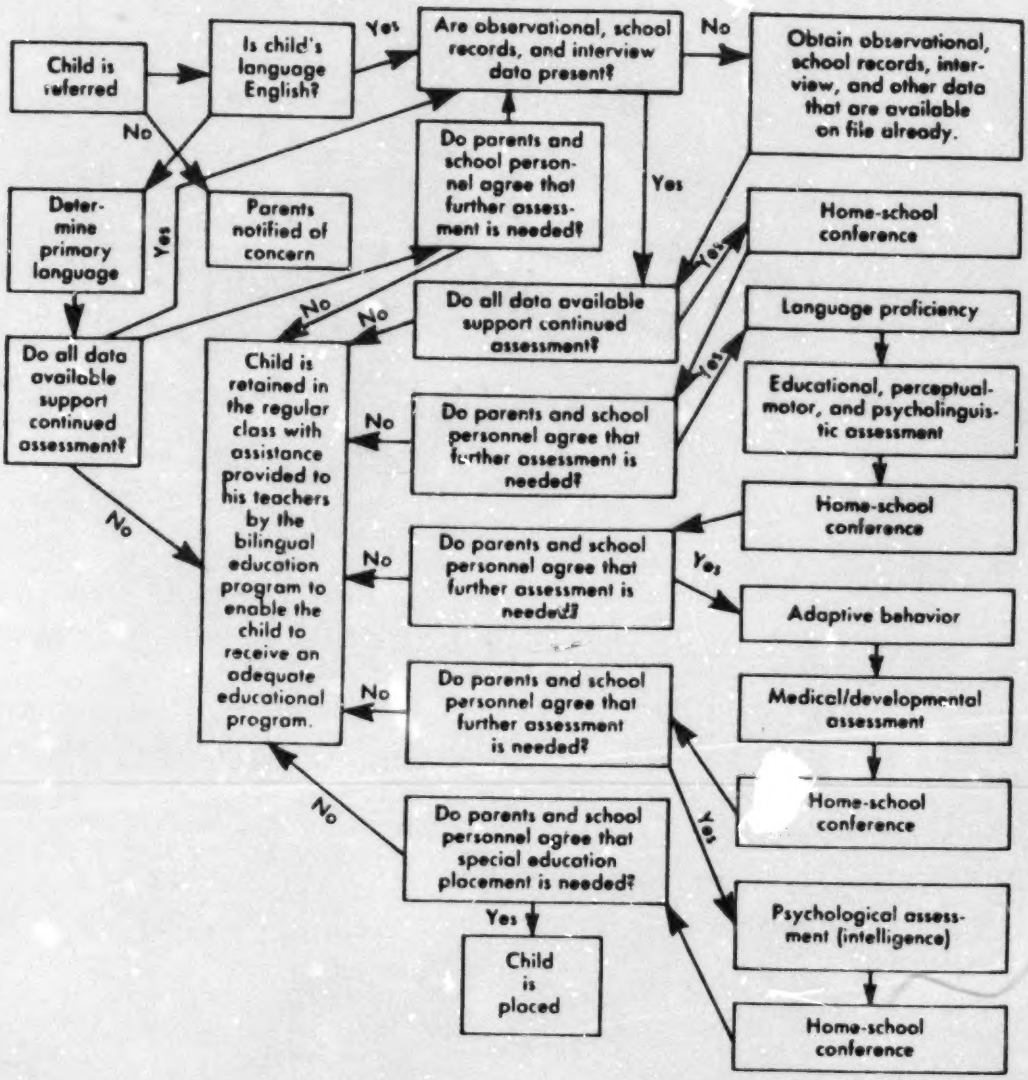
eligible for special education services are placed in either speech handicapped or learning disabilities programs--categories that are both language related. This finding suggests that appraisal personnel experience difficulty in differentiating linguistic difference from language deficits or a learning disability.

As a proposed solution to this problem, models have been developed which emphasize procedural safeguards to be considered when assessing language minority students. A discussion of two of these models designed for use with culturally/linguistically different students will be presented, with a focus upon possible integration of the two models.

A modification of Tucker's model (1977) is reported by Baca and Cervantes (1984). This model (Figure 1) outlines decision-making steps which must be considered for the limited-English proficient student. This model clearly considers specific procedural safeguards for students referred to special education. One strength of this model is that the parents of a referred child are consulted at every stage of the assessment process. They are able to participate, provide feedback to school personnel and have the opportunity to contribute to their child's educational planning. This participation is particularly important in the case of the LEP child because it helps to form a stronger bond between parents, school and child in a population which historically has not experienced optimal home/school relations, either because of language, cultural or socioeconomic status differences.

A second strength of the model is that it relies on a variety of different types of data obtained from different sources. For example, observational data, interviews, school records, language proficiency, educational, psycholinguistic and psychological data are all used at some point in the assessment process. Moreover, whereas traditional assessment models place almost total emphasis upon

Figure 1


Child is referred
Is child's language English?
Yes
No
Are observational, school records, and interview data present?
No
Obtain observational, school records, interview, and other data that are available on file already.
Yes
Determine primary language
Yes
Parents notified of concern
Do parents and school personnel agree that further assessment is needed?
Home-school conference
Yes
Do all data available support continued assessment?
No
No
Language proficiency
Do all data available support continued assessment?
Yes
Child is retained in the regular class with assistance provided to his teachers by the bilingual education program to enable the child to receive an adequate educational program.
Do parents and school personnel agree that further assessment is needed?
No
Educational, perceptual-motor, and psycholinguistic assessment
Home-school conference
No
Do parents and school personnel agree that further assessment is needed?
Yes
Adaptive behavior
Do parents and school personnel agree that further assessment is needed?
No
Medical/developmental assessment
Home-school conference
No
Do parents and school personnel agree that special education placement is needed?
Yes
Psychological assessment (intelligence)
Child is placed
Home-school conference

An assessment procedure for bilingual exceptional children.
(Modeled after Tucker, J.A. Operationalizing the diagnostic intervention process. In Oakland, T.M., editor. Psychological and educational assessment of minority children. New York, 1977, Brunner/Mazel, Inc.)

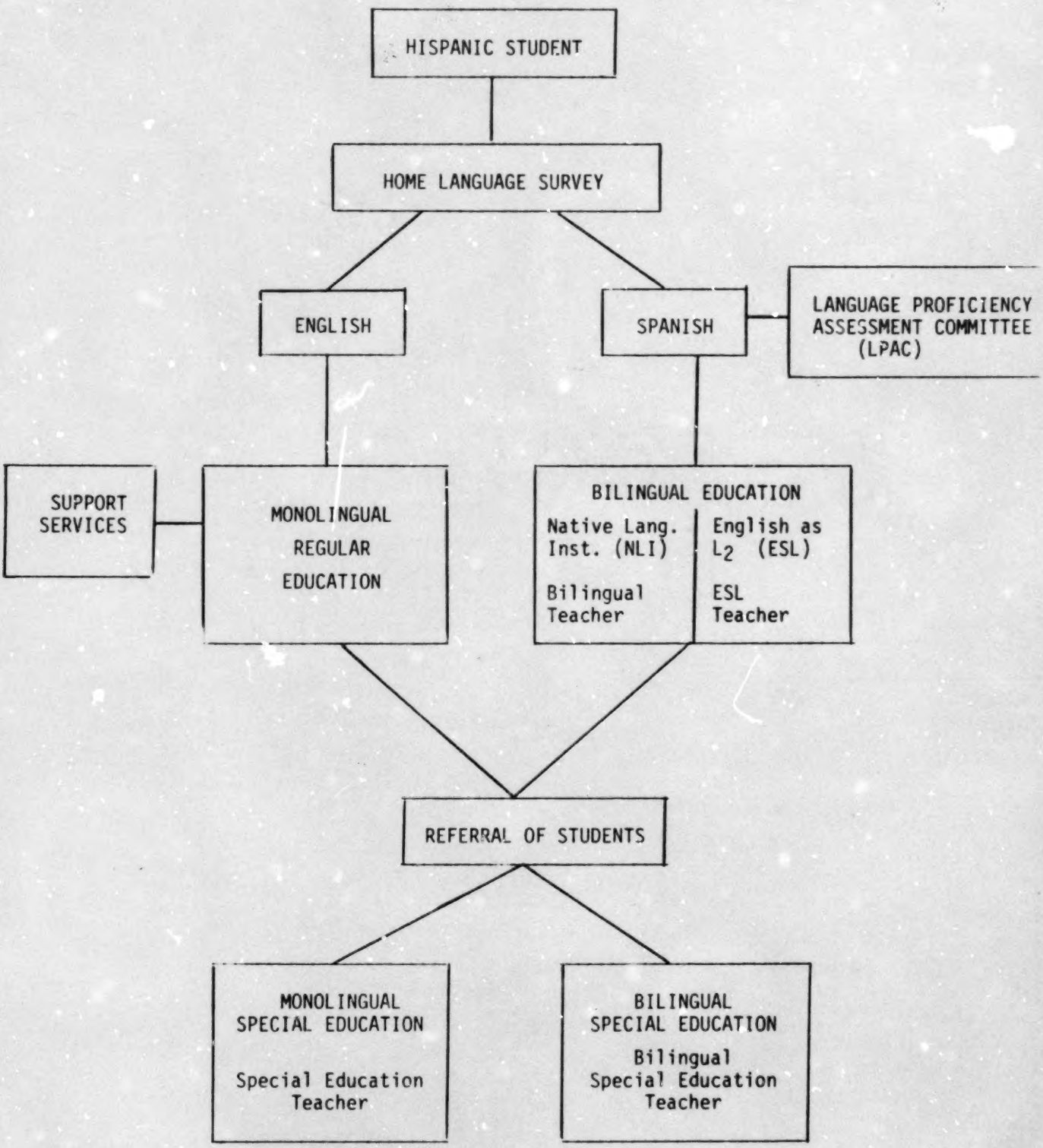
the psychological assessment phase (intelligence tests), the modified Tucker model prescribes IQ tests only after all other types of assessment data have been gathered and analyzed. According to this model, then, only a small number of children ultimately would be placed in special education classes. If school personnel followed this model carefully, the LEP child would benefit from the resulting procedural safeguards that traditional assessment models have not been able to provide.

It should be noted that the modified Tucker model presents decision-making steps after the LEP student already has been referred for assessment to determine special education placement. Mendoza's (1983) Coordinated Service Delivery Model (Figure 2), on the other hand, delineates procedural safeguards at the pre-assessment stage to validate the referral of the culturally/linguistic different (CLD) or LEP student. These interventions fall within the jurisdiction of regular and bilingual education while those proposed in the modified Tucker model fall in the realm of special education and subsequently involve school appraisal personnel.

In Mendoza's model (Figure 2), a CLD student's language proficiency levels, determined by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), provide relevant aspects of a bilingual child's linguistic abilities that must be taken into consideration. The LPAC serves as a procedural safegurad for the LEP child. For example, the LPAC may determine that a student was not tested in the right languages, thus yielding invalid information which eventually could have resulted in an inappropriate eligibility diagnosis, placement and/or educational prescription. The role assigned to the LPAC places a high priority upon determining specific levels of language proficiency through a comprehensive language

Figure 2

COORDINATED SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL - ASSESSMENT



Patricia Mendoza, Ph.D.
Bilingual Special Education Training Project
The University of Texas at Austin
1983

assessment. Information gathered by the LPAC is then used to determine appropriate placement for the student.

The complexities inherent in the concept of bilingualism are reflected in the heterogeneous linguistic abilities of children who are proficienct to varying degrees in their first and second languages. Appropriate placement requires a variety of instructional linguistic options for the bilingual child to remain in a regular classroom setting while receiving support from a bilingual teacher. Depending upon their linguistic abilities, some non-English dominant children would be provided only minimal support in their native language. Different types of majority and minority language immersion programs also are possible, depending upon the needs of the child. The important point to make is that the population of bilingual children is represented by diverse subgroups marked by linguistic and cultural differences; consequently, bilingual education should be able to respond to the instructional needs of these children, whether that be through native language instruction, English as a second language, a monolingual class with support services, or a combination of these other approaches. No student is referred for possible special education placement until a comprehensive program of instruction has been attempted within an appropriate linguistic context.

The success of this model also is dependent upon a close collaboration among school personnel, thus, the bilingual education instructor would provide appropriate linguistic expertise and monolingual regular education teachers would share strategies and ideas. Each professional has information of value to share with the other one regarding a child's academic and social functioning,

and because of language and cultural factors, the bilingual teacher can aid the monolingual teacher in better understanding the needs of LEP children. Since qualified bilingual personnel are in short supply and the number of LEP children in our public schools continues to increase, this coordinated effort is paramount and provides a viable solution in a naturally occurring manner.

For a minority of Hispanic students who have special needs which cannot be met within a mainstream classroom setting, either a monolingual special education or bilingual special education setting would be appropriate. Before placement, each child would have been protected throughout the assessment process by the procedural safeguards of the modified Tucker model.

It is not sufficient to state that the bilingual exceptional child should have the right to be placed in a special education class which happens to be staffed by bilingual personnel, although this is a step in the right direction. A better alternative would be to have a certified bilingual special education teacher in the classroom who understands the linguistic, cultural and special educational needs of these children. This teacher would be knowledgeable of both bilingual education and special education and would be able to use this knowledge as a means of understanding the separate innovative field of bilingual special education. There are many individuals, including bilingual teachers and special education teachers, who believe that bilingual exceptional children should not be provided with bilingual instruction because they are unable to learn in even one language, much less two! But Cummins (1983) has shown that bilingual exceptional students can profit just as other students do, as long as language or languages used are communicated in a comprehensible manner. Learning a second language also can be a positive experience for these children which increases their sense of competency.

In conclusion, both models attempt to meet the needs of LEP and bilingual exceptional children, but an integration of models as those proposed by Tucker and Mendoza holds the most promise. Further refinement obviously will be needed as more is learned about culturally and linguistically different students. The problem for the future will center around how to meet the needs of such a large and diverse population which taxes our nation's resources, how to impact training programs currently in place to prepare bilingual special education personnel to provide appropriate services for CLD/LEP population, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of those changes in assessment practices that we are implementing.

References

Baca, L.M. & Cervantes, H.T. (1984). The Bilingual Special Education Interface. St. Louis, Mo.: Times Mirror/Mosby College Publishing.

Cummins, J. (1983). Bilingualism and special education: Program and pedagogical issues. Learning Disabilities Quarterly, 6(4), pp. 373-386.

Gonzalez, J.C. & Mendoza, P. (1983). Considerations in the implementations and evaluation of special education programs serving bilingual students. Unpublished manuscript. The University of Texas at Austin.

Mendoza, P. (1984). Coordinated service delivery model. Personal communication. Department of Special Education, The University of Texas at Austin.

Ortiz, A.A. & Yates, J.R. (1981). Exceptional Hispanics: Implications for Special Services and Manpower Planning. Austin: Texas Education Agency, Division of Special Education.

Ortiz, A.A. & Yates, J.R. (1983). Incidence of exceptionality among Hispanics: Implications for manpower planning. Journal of the National Association of Bilingual Education, 7(3), pp. 41-53.

Shepard, L. & Smith, M.L. (1981). Evaluation of the Identification of Perceptual Communicative Disorders in Colorado: Final Report. Laboratory of Educational Research, University of Colorado at Boulder.

Tucker, J. (1977). Operationalizing in the diagnostic intervention process. In Oakland, T.M. (Ed.), Psychological and Educational Assessment of Minority Children. New York: Brenner/Mazel, Inc.

Paper Presented at the Annual Conference

of the

American Psychological Association

(92nd, Toronto, Canada, August 24-28, 1984)